

Public Involvement Process for the Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS*)

Purpose of the Public Involvement Process (PIP): *To outline methods and approximate time frames for encouraging citizens, affected organizations and other interested parties to be involved in and comment on development of the long-range transportation plan for Central Oklahoma, called the 2030 OCARTS Plan; the short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the OCARTS area; and the ongoing transportation planning process. Methods for encouraging involvement include providing access to plans and programs, and their supporting materials, and opportunities to comment as the plan or program develops. Implementation of scheduled activities is designed to meet or exceed requirements of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The Public Involvement Process is periodically evaluated and revised, as needed, to ensure its continued effectiveness. A 45-day public review and comment period is provided with each proposed revision to the PIP.*

The public was invited to comment on this process and the methods outlined for involvement between April 15 and June 1, 2004, by sending written comments to Jerry Church, Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, 21 E. Main, Suite 100, Oklahoma City, OK 73104, or faxing to (405) 234-2200, or e-mailing to jchurch@acogok.org. The Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee (ITPC) approved this PIP on May 27, 2004, with an effective date of June 2, 2004.

A. PROPOSED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

April 2004

Announce availability of the proposed revisions to the Public Involvement Process through area media and the metropolitan library system. Announcements will be sent to area publications, including the Oklahoman, Journal Record, Black Chronicle, El Nacional, Dan Quyen Newspaper, Norman Transcript, Edmond Sun, Midwest City Sun and others. The announcement will be made through a media release. The PIP also will be distributed to local libraries affiliated with the metropolitan library system (those throughout the OCARTS area), and will be available on ACOG's Web site, at www.acogok.org. In addition, media releases will be sent to minority organizations and special interest groups such as bicyclists, transit riders, rail advocates, trucking industry representatives, chambers of commerce, neighborhood organizations, elderly and disabled advocacy groups and others for their information and inclusion in their newsletters. Following issuance of the announcements, 45 days will be allowed for citizens to comment on the Public Involvement Process.

* *The OCARTS area includes all of Oklahoma and Cleveland Counties and portions of Canadian, Logan, Grady and McClain Counties (see attached map).*

B. OCARTS LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

General

A dedicated section of the ACOG Web site, www.acogok.org, is reserved for the long range plan and will be utilized for updates, text, reports, public forum news, public commentary interaction and other. Occasionally, the Web site will be used to develop e-mailable updates, either directing people to the site, or by including new information via e-mail. MPO staff will be available to speak to interested groups about the MPO's activities and the intent and impact of the long range plan on the region.

August 2004

Conduct a survey to elicit feedback about future transportation needs in Central Oklahoma. The survey will be included in *Central Oklahoma Perspective* (ACOG monthly newsletter with a circulation of 1,600) and interactively on ACOG's Web site. It also will be provided to metro area newspapers for publication and will be provided to minority organizations and special interest groups for inclusion in their newsletters.

October 2004

Reconvene a citizens' advisory committee (CAC) composed of private citizens and representatives of local governments, chambers of commerce, special interest groups, neighborhoods, minority populations, all travel modes (trucking, rail, air, bicycle/pedestrian, transit and highways) and others interested in the transportation planning process. The CAC will serve for the remainder of the plan development process as an advisory committee to the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee.

January 2005

Conduct two public meetings to encourage questions and comments about plan alternatives. These will be conducted in a come-and-go format with informational displays, handouts, technical experts and opportunities for written and/or verbal comments. The MPO will strive to hold public meetings at times and locations convenient to the general public, including citizens that are physically disabled who need wheelchair accessibility and/or a sign language interpreter. The public meetings will be accessible by fixed public bus route. Provide timely information about the transportation plan process to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties.

April 2005

Publish a summary of the recommended 2030 OCARTS Plan (Draft Plan Summary) and distribute for public review and comment. The summary will include recommendations for all modes and will be widely distributed to the media, local libraries and will be available on the ACOG Web site. The draft plan summary will also be provided to citizens, agencies, committee members and others who have been involved in development of the Plan. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the recommended Plan.

June 2005

The ITPC will conduct a public hearing prior to consideration of adoption of the recommended plan. Notices of public hearing will be published at least 30 days in advance of the public hearing and a news release will be provided to all media outlets.

October 2005

Publish a Plan brochure that describes the adopted 2030 OCARTS Plan. The brochure will be distributed to all citizens who have participated in any phase of the planning process as well as other involved agencies and jurisdictions. The brochure also will be available on ACOG's Web site.

Plan Amendments

The OCARTS Plan may be considered for amendment by the Transportation Policy Committee at any time. A Notice of Public Hearing for each proposed amendment to the adopted Plan will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the entity or entities impacted by the proposed amendment. The Notice of Public Hearing will be published at least 30 days prior to the date of the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee meeting, at which the amendment will be considered for approval. Requests for Plan amendments shall also be presented to the Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee for a recommendation to the ITPC. Additional public notice of proposed Plan amendments may also be provided through press releases or other appropriate means. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the requested amendment.

C. OCARTS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

October

A three-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the OCARTS area will be developed annually in accordance with the *Procedures for Developing and Amending the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and Oklahoma Metropolitan Planning Organizations' Transportation Improvement Programs* (jointly adopted by the MPOs, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration).

Development of the OCARTS TIP will begin in October each year with announcement of the schedule for preparing the new TIP. The schedule will include key dates for ensuring timely TIP development, as well as timeframes for notifying the public of opportunities to review and comment on the preliminary and final documents prior to MPO adoption.

April

A preliminary TIP will be made available for public review and comment during the month of April. The preliminary TIP will be available on ACOG's Web site and distributed to all metro area libraries. A notice of the availability of the preliminary document will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the OCARTS area, in *Central Oklahoma Perspective*, and a media release will be issued to advise where the preliminary document may be viewed and when it will be considered by the Policy Committee. Notification will also be mailed to members of the Citizens Advisory Committee, individuals on the Transportation Users Group Mailing List and others (including citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, and representatives of users of public transit). All substantive comments will be summarized and provided to the ITPC prior to consideration of the preliminary TIP during its regular April meeting. Comments concerning specific projects or proposals will be forwarded to the sponsoring agency or jurisdiction. A written response will be provided to the commenter concerning any recommendations or decisions arising from the ITPC meeting or the sponsoring entity, as appropriate.

ACOG will publish a Notice of Public Hearing in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the OCARTS area prior to consideration of the final OCARTS TIP by the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee. The notice will be published at least 30 days prior to the date of the May Policy Committee meeting. The Notice of Public Hearing will advise of the date, time and place that the Policy Committee will conduct the public hearing for consideration of adoption of the final TIP. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the final TIP.

May

The Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee will conduct a public hearing during its regular May meeting to consider adoption of the final TIP for the OCARTS area.

TIP Amendments

The Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee may consider amendment of the OCARTS TIP any time during the TIP period. A Notice of Public Hearing for each proposed amendment to the adopted TIP will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the entity or entities impacted by the amendment. The Notice of Public Hearing will be published at least 14 days prior to the date of the Intermodal Transportation Policy Committee meeting at which the amendment will be considered for approval. All comments received will be summarized and presented to the ITPC prior to its consideration of the requested amendment.

D. ONGOING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS

Special Studies – Integration of Planning and Environmental Processes

At the beginning of any special study concerning transportation corridors or modes, the MPO will assist the lead entity in defining a public education and input process to involve potentially impacted individuals and groups. The process will be designed to ensure early and continual input from citizens and other interested parties throughout the length of the study. The process will introduce the public to the nature and scope of the study, potential alternatives and any final recommendations, as well as potential broad social, economic and environmental impacts that could result from the recommended improvement. The data and recommendations developed during the special study will provide input for any subsequent environmental assessments.

Citizens Advisory Committee

A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will continue to be convened, as needed, to provide review and input on special transportation studies, including the long range transportation plan for the OCARTS area and amendments to the adopted Plan. Members of the CAC will provide geographic representation throughout the OCARTS area and will include, but not be limited to, individuals who represent the interests of private citizens, minorities, business, various transportation modes, low income, advocacy groups (i.e. environmental, aging, persons with disabilities, etc.) and public officials.

Internet

ACOG's Web site, at www.acogok.org will include all of the published materials identified in this Public Involvement Process (PIP) related to development of the 2030 OCARTS Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other public involvement efforts of the OCARTS transportation planning process. Such published materials will include media releases, surveys, public meeting notices, brochures, and so forth. The text will either be hyperlinked or available to download through Adobe PDF format.

Newsletter

ACOG's monthly newsletter, *Central Oklahoma Perspective*, will be utilized to distribute information on the OCARTS transportation planning process, including information on the Long-Range Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and upcoming public meetings and public hearings for various highway and transit programs.

Meetings

The MPO staff will meet with city councils; neighborhood, civic, private sector, economic interest, minority, or other groups; and economically or physically disadvantaged groups, as requested, to discuss the transportation planning process and/or specific metropolitan transportation projects and needs.

Media Releases

The MPO will prepare media releases, brochures, or other publications explaining aspects of the transportation planning process. Media releases will be distributed to regional media outlets in the OCARTS area, including minority newspapers, and to the Native American tribal governments. Special materials may also be prepared on issues such as air quality, alternative fuels, energy, the Census, the federal Surface Transportation Law and other topics, as the need arises.

Local Government Citizens Committees

From time to time, local governments, as a part of their land use planning or capital improvements planning processes, utilize citizens committees to develop transportation priorities. The MPO encourages cities and counties to work with such committees, and to communicate the results/conclusions about transportation priorities in writing to their staff and elected representatives on the ITTC and ITPC. A written copy of the results/conclusions should also be forwarded to the MPO staff.

Oklahoma City Area Regional Transportation Study (OCARTS) Area

